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ABSTRACT

Like other political speakers who have drawn on the personification, identification, and dramatic encounter images of mythology to pressure and persuade audiences, Jimmy Carter evoked the myths of the hero, the American Dream, and the ideal political process in his presidential nomination acceptance speech. By stressing his unknown status, his difficulty in achieving the nomination amid the derision of his opposition, and his quest for the leadership of a moral and dynamic government, Carter developed the unpromising hero or Cinderella mythological image. In his vision of the future, he presented himself in the deliverer/benefactor image. Carter developed the American Dream myth by emphasizing the moral values of hope, honesty, and faith in America at the same time that he promised materialistic improvement in the country. An additional myth that Carter employed, concerning the nature of the American political process, was apparent when he claimed that he and a Democratic Congress could restructure government in a way that surpasses rationality and ability and that he would assure popular participation in government by giving "the government of this country back to the people of this country." (MAI)

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MYTHS AND POLITICAL RHETORIC: JIMMY CARTER ACCEPTS THE NOMINATION

Commenting on the 1976 presidential campaign as it entered its final stage, MIT Professor of Political Science Walter Burnham observed: "Public opinion this year is both extremely volatile and charged with free floating hostility toward politics and politicians. . . . Above all . . . the election will be decided by the aggregate judgment of those who will vote on the personal qualifications, as they see them, of the two men. Victory will go to the winner of the image war."[1] In order to win this war, Jimmy Carter, a man virtually unknown outside Georgia only two years earlier, had to create a positive perception (or, as some would have it, provide materials for a positive "image allocation") of himself as a man worthy and capable of being President. He had to persuade potential voters that he was the candidate who could best unify the nation and begin to solve some of the basic problems confronting it.

Carter's first opportunity to address the entire nation in his capacity as the official Democratic presidential candidate was, of course, his acceptance speech delivered at the Democratic Convention in New York on July 15, 1976. An analysis of this speech indicates that in his attempts to create a positive image, Carter consciously or unconsciously relied on the force of powerful cultural myths, especially those dealing with the nature of the Hero, the American Dream, and the American political process. In an attempt to understand the part these myths may have played in

the war between images, this paper will consider three topics: 1) the nature and function of myths; 2) the relationship between myths and rhetoric, particularly political rhetoric; and 3) the manner in which specific myths were used by Jimmy Carter in his acceptance speech.

The Nature and Function of Myths

As Waldo Braden points out in his discussion of "Myths in a Rhetorical Context," "myth" is not an easy term to define or to explain because "it is illusive and nebulous and depends for its force upon its loose structure."[2] A variety of definitions have been offered, however, which suggest identifiable, if not precise, boundaries. Joseph Campbell notes that according to Freud "Myths are of the psychological order of dreams. Myths, so to say, are public dreams; dreams are private myths."[3] Walter Fisher suggests that myths are "the fictions that people live by," or the way in which they wish to conceive of themselves.[4] Historian Richard Hofstadter maintains that while myths may indeed have varying degrees of fiction and reality, still a myth is not "an idea that is simply false, but rather one that so effectively embodies men's values that it profoundly influences their ways of perceiving reality and hence their behavior."[5] In Leo Marx's words, myths are cultural symbols which are the product not of individual rumination but of the "collective imagination."[6] Braden effectively summarizes the elements of myth pointed to by these and other authors:

> . . . these sources suggest that the myth draws upom memory and imagination, that it results from a collective effort over a considerable period of time, that it represents an oversimplification of events, persons, and relationships, that its substance is more emotional than logical, and that it combines both reality and fiction. In other words, it results from considerable abstracting on the part of many persons.[7]

An additional characteristic of myth is that "it is generally unquestioned, widely taught and believed,"[8] that it is accepted "without reflection or questioning."[9] A myth gains this acceptance and strength through repetition, which may be achieved through ritual, defined as "a motor activity that involves its participants symbolically in a common enterprise, calling their attention to their relatedness and joint interests in a compelling way." Finally, Edelman argues that a society's myths have consequences for that society, although frequently not the ones the myth literally proclaims.[10]

Myths serve several functions in the maintenance of social order and cultural continuity. Initially myths aid in the individual's integration into a particular culture: "By absorbing the myths of his social group and participating in its rites, the youngster is structured to accord with his social as well as natural environment, and turned from an amorphous nature product, prematurely born, into a defined and competent member of some specific, efficiently functioning social order."[11] Although some aspects of social myths may be singled out and specifically taught, a child usually learns

the major myths of the culture--its conception of itself, its its ideals and expectations--primarily by living within what Malinowski calls the "social texture of his tribe."[12]

Once the individual has internalized the basic values and viewpoints of the culture as exemplified in the societal myths, the function of these "public dreams" changes. According to Braden, the main function of myths at this point is "to confirm, intensify, and amplify sentiments and attitudes."[13] In other words, when myths or mythic images are evoked, beliefs already possessed as a result of the socialization process are strengthened, social relatedness and joint interests are pointed out, and cultural continuity is emphasized. Myths and their related rituals thus both promote conformity and evoke what Edelman calls "satisfaction and joy" in that conformity.[14] This "satisfaction and joy" may be so great that membership in a particular group can come to depend on some "continued overt demonstration of the faithful acceptance of various facets of the imaginary picture." Those with a great personal investment in the cultural myths and the conformity engendered by them may allow no challenge[15]--the "America, Love It or Leave It" syndrome.

One fundamental human urge seems to be the desire to find meaning and order in confusing and ambiguous situations. Cultural myths may provide an individual with a means for imposing such meaning and order where none can readily be discerned or when what is perceived is in some way unacceptable. Braden asserts that in these circumstances myths may suggest possibilities for

rationalizations, escapes, and fantasies--that myths may act as "blank checks" which an individual may fill in with "any meaning or feeling that he abstracts from what is pleasant while he ignores or forgets what is disturbing."[16]

Myths may also provide individuals with a mechanism for adjusting to that which is beyond their understanding or control. For example, few if any within modern society have access to enough information truly to understand the intricacies of the political system under which they live, yet they must deal with it and with the public policies devised and enforced by means of it. Myths which provide explanations and interpretations of the way things work may be, according to Edelman, "the only means by which groups not in a position to analyze a complex situation rationally may adjust themselves to it, through stereotypization, oversimplification, and reassurance."[17] Because of the public interest in reassurance in situations such as this, the power of myths and symbols stands in an inverse relationship to the amount of information and degree of understanding.

Myths and Rhetoric

If one accepts Kenneth Burke's explanation of persuasion in terms of identification or consubstantiality, the relevance of myths to the study of rhetoric in general becomes clear. Burke maintains that "a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications."[18] Cultural myths may provide a source

for those "common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes" used to create identification. Such myths are a particularly fruitful source since thay may be called forth with a minimum of time and effort; frequently a single word or phrase which stands as a symbol or sign for a particular myth (i.e., "the flag") is sufficient. These words or phrases are condensation symbols: which "... . evoke the emotions associated with the situation. They condense into one symbolic event, sign, or act patriotic pride, anxieties, remembrances of past glories or humiliations, promises of future greatness: some one or all of them."[19] The ambiguity and lack of definite form inherent in myths increases their usefulness as rhetorical devices for identification. Due to the "blank check" quality of myths pointed out by Braden, any myth evoked will be variously interpreted by the hearers to suit their individual needs and beliefs, a factor which knowledgable speakers can use to their advantage.

For political speakers, especially candidates, myths may provide a source of materials from which to draw when attempting to project a particular leadership style or image. A variety of models have been suggested to explain the way in which political leaders seek to establish their images in the public eye. Nimmo delineates three basic means: 1) personification, or "the efforts of political leaders to play definite roles in political conflicts," to become social types such as the "little man" or the "crime fighter"; 2) identification, through which the poltical leader seeks to symbolize whatever he believes to be the principal aspirations of the mass; and 3) dramatic encounter, "the effort of a poltical leader to place himself in selected settings that

demonstrate he is virtuous, trustworthy, forceful, decisive, and the authentic leader of the forces of good."[20] An alternative explanation is that offered by Robert Anderson's characterization model which maintains that candidates do not "create" images so much as voters "allocate" them. Candidates attempt to influence this allocation through characterization strategies: "Each candidate has a particular and probably consistent manner of characterizing his opponent; each candidate has a particular and probably consistent manner of characterizing himself. He strives for a situation of negative public perception of his opponent's abilities concurrent with positive public perception of his own abilities."[21]

How does myth relate to these theories of image creation and allocation? The nature of public myths may indicate to perceptive political leaders what means or tools they may be able to use: what roles they may wish to personify, the principal aspirations which which they may seek to identify themselves, and the types of encounters which are most likely to produce the intended effect. Certainly common beliefs and attitudes embodied in the current public myths will affect the way in which potential voters perceive and interpret characterizations and therefore how they allocate images, although the effects of a given myth may vary from person to person and subgroup to subgroup.

Myths may also provide something beyond a source of materials and rhetorical devices. Braden asserts that "To regard the myth as just another rhetorical device, occasionally inserted into a speech

for variety and impressiveness, is to miss its essential nature. The myth or a cluster of myths is likely to permeate the whole structure and development of a composition. They subtly influence and reinforce the entire presentation. Instead of being an isolated or exclusive device, the myth is more a strategy, a mood, or a modus operandi."[22] This analysis can be extended logically to the entire campaign of a political candidate. An individual may consciously choose to use a given myth or set of myths as an organizing feature for campaign strategy; perhaps the same effect may result without conscious choice as a result of the particular candidate's personality and deeply held beliefs.[23] It may be as well that potential voters perceive a mythical content when none is intended, in which case their perception and/or allocation of mythic content will affect their attitudes and voting behavior whether the candidate would have it so or not.

One final comment, a speculation really, seems in order concerning the relationship between myths and leaders and attempts at political persuasion. It may be that the successful candidate in any race--the one who persuades the most voters to check his or her name on the ballot--is the one whose image or leadership style most closely resembles or reflects the myths of current paramount interest within the culture. The charismatic leader would thus be the individual who comes very close to the mark indeed and therefore is able to tap the tremendous emotional energy invested in the societal myths. On those occasions when a political

contest stirs little or no interest in the public, perhaps none of the candidates succeeds in reflecting mythic concerns, regardless of how skilled they and their campaign managers are in the techniques of characterization, personification, and dramatic encounter.

Myths and Jimmy Carter

The acceptance speech of a contemporary presidential nominee is not simply part of a ritual conferring knighthood, but the first opportunity for the nominee to address the nation as the official candidate of a major party. When Jimmy Carter spoke to the Democratic Convention and the nation, he faced a larger and differently composed audience of potential voters than he had addressed during the primary campaign. His immediate task with this new audience was to project an image of himself as a man worthy and capable enough to be President.

One of the popular stories about Carter throughout the primary campaign had been that a mere three years previously, panelists on "What's My Line?" had failed to recognize the then Governor of Georgia.[24] When told by Carter supporters, the anecdote was used to indicate how far their man had come. It also pointed to a continuing problem for Carter: to many Americans he remained a largely unknown quantity. Since his political involvement and exposure prior to the primary campaign had been limited largely to Georgia, voters elsewhere had little firsthand, concrete information about his experience and accomplishments on which to base

an evaluation of his suitability for the office of President.

In addition, Americans in 1976 seemed to hold generally lower opinions of the major candidates than had been the norm in recent elections. In a Gallup poll conducted just prior to the Democratic Convention, Jimmy Carter received a "highly favorable" rating from only 25% of those questioned, while Ford and Reagan were so raced by only 22%. These figures are in sharp contrast with the percentage of highly favorable ratings received by three out of the last four successful presidential candidates at approximately the same point in their campaigns: 47% for Eisenhower (1952), 41% for Kennedy (1960), 59% for Johnson (1964), and 28% for Nixon (1968). Time concluded that "the current ratings would seem to indicate that the country is turned off by politicians." Carter's campaign manager, Hamilton Jorden, asserted that the basic problem for his candidate lay in Carter's "soft" or "blurred" image.[25] It was particularly important for Carter to provide the sort of image which would motivate voters to vote since polls consistently predicted a low turnout in November, a circumstance more likely to hurt the Democratic rather than the Republican candidate.

The Hero

One of the time-honored strategies used by political leaders who wish to be seen as strong, capable individuals is to evoke the myth of the Hero and to attempt to associate themselves with it. An examination of Carter's acceptance speech indicates that he made

considerable use of this strategy. Whether this was the result of a deliberate and informed choice is unknown, but its presence is clear.

In folklore, a Hero is an extraordinary person who successfully undertakes a feat, a test, a contest, or the more involved quest, which may include a series of feats, tests, and contests.[26] Heroes come in a number of basic types, such as the Clever Hero, the Benefactor, the Martyr, the Deliverer, and the Cinderella or Unpromising Hero. A given individual may reflect several of these types or parts of several: "Some are found to have a diversity of roles, some only a few or perhaps only one typical action attributed to them."[27] As portrayed in his acceptance speech, Jimmy Carter appears to be a typical Hero of the Cinderella or Unpromising variety who, on the completionof his Quest, expects to be transformed into a combination Deliverer/Benefactor.

Most campaigns for political office can be considered Quests. According to Stelzner, a Quest is a search for something which includes: "(1) a precious Object and/or Person to be found and possessed or married;(2) a long journey to find the Object, because its whereabouts are not originally known to the Seekers; (3) a Hero; (4) the Guardians of the Object who must be overcome before it can be won; and (5) the Helpers who with their knowledge and/or magical powers assist the Hero and but for whom he would never succeed."[28] A campaign for the Presidency is really a two-part Quest: the candidate must first pursue and secure the nomination, then he must do the same for the office. The basic elements of Carter's Quest

may be summarized briefly:

Element	Phase 1	Phase 2
1. Precious Object	The Nomination	Presidency/Moral Government
2. Long Journey	Primary Campaign	National Campaign/Term of Offic
3. Hero	Carter(Cinderella)	Carter(Deliverer/Benefactor)
4. Guardians	Democratic Party Establishment/ Front Runners	Republicans
5. Helpers	Carter Supporters and Voters	Carter Supporters and voters/ the American People

In his acceptance speech, Carter makes a number of references to the campaign for the nomination which direct the audience's attention to the length, difficulty, and success of the first part of the Quest, such as:

> This year we have had thirty state primaries, more than ever before, making it possible to take our campaign directly to the people of America--to homes and shopping centers, factory shift lines, and colleges, to barber shops and beauty parlors, to farmer's markets and union halls.
>
> This has been a long and personal campaign--a humbling experience . . .[29]

Carter's introductory statement--"My name is Jimmy Carter and I'm running for President"[30]--may be interpreted in a number of ways in relation to the concept of the Quest: 1) as a reference to Phase 1,

now completed (it had been Carter's standard introductory comment throughout the primary campaign); 2) as a comment on the success of Phase 1 (now he really is running for President, not just the nomination); and/or 3) as a reminder of what lies ahead in Phase 2.

Carter discusses each of the basic elements of the Quest, as when he describes the activities of the Republican incumbents-Guardians and the part the American citizen-Helper may play in the reshaping of society. He seems to concentrate, however, on the Precious Object to be sought in the form of a moral and dynamic government. The vision he describes is briefly summarized in his conclusion: "I see an America on the move again, united, a diverse and vital and tolerant nation, entering our third century with pride and confidence--an America that lives up to the majesty of our constitution and the simple decency of our people."

At the beginning of his Quest, Carter was clearly the Unpromising Hero or Cinderella. According to Klapp, "We may define the Cinderella role as follows: (a) an unpromising person (b) is derided or persecuted by rivals (c) before his unexpected brilliant triumph. By way of contrast to the unexpected victories of the clever hero, the unpromising hero succeeds by some other means than cleverness, usually luck, miraculous assistance, or modest toil."[31] The Unpromising Hero is the dark horse, the poor, unfortunate, or unknown person who becomes set apart from others through some distinguished service or a personal goal attained. He is the David who slays a powerful Goliath, either for his own or others' benefit.

Carter certainly qualified as a political dark horse when he began his campaign nearly two years before the nominating convention. He was a Southerner, largely unknown outside his own part of the country. Since he did not work through the Democratic Party structure, he incurred some distrust and little help from party bosses and most party regulars. His rivals were numerous and active. Carter overcame thse obstacles and won the nomination through his own efforts to meet and persuade voters in primary after primary. He did it his way and succeeded--Cinderella won the prince.

Carter himself seems to acknowledge and play upon this image in his acceptance speech. When he began with the statement "My name is Jimmy Carter and I'm running for President," as was pointed out above, he immediately evoked the image of himself as the Unpromising--but successful--Hero. It was recognizable to his hearers as his opening line from the earliest days of his campaign, when few knew who he was and such an introduction and statement of purpose was necessary. It now served as a useful device for reminding everyone, supporters and detractors alike, just how far he had come. Carter makes other references to his status as Cinderella as well, such as this explicit statement reminiscent of the "log cabin" or "just plain folks" appeals of some previous candidates: "I remember years ago as a farm boy sitting outdoors with my family in the middle of the night, gathered around a radio connected to out automobile battery and listening to the Democratic Conventions in far-off cities. I was then a long way from the selection process. I feel much closer to it tonight."

The majority of the acceptance speech, however, is concerned with the second phase of the Quest and Carter's vision of the future. In describing that vision, Carter attempts to create an image of the kind of President he will be--no longer a Cinderella but a Deliverer/Benefactor. According to Klapp, the Deliverer is characteristically an individual who comes to rescue a person or group from danger or distress, a dragon-slayer, a defender from human enemies, or a deliverer from impersonal evils such as plagues and misfortunes.[32] Carter makes explicit and implicit promises to deliver the nation from those who have been responsible for "failures and mediocrity," moral decay, a disrupted economy, and a multitude of other evils: "We have suffered enough at the hands of a tired, worn out administration without new ideas, without youth and vitality, without vision, and without the confidence of the American people." From all this, Carter promises to deliver us.

Carter pledges to fulfill the role of Benefactor as well, to be one who provides benefactions and services other than deliverance, who is kind-hearted and helpful, especially to the poor.[33] The benefits Carter will provide are enumerated in a list of "We <u>can</u> have" statements and include moral government, excellent education for all, pride in diversity, and mutually supportive freedom and equality.

Thus, in his acceptance speech Cater seems both to recognize and to play upon his status as an Unpromising Hero during the first part of his Quest: he has shown himself to be aggressive and capable.

Carter also attempts to create an image of the kind of President he will be, an image which includes elements of the Deliverer and the Benefactor: he will be worthy. In addition, Carter asserts that he will not forget his origins, that his basis for success lies in his Helpers for he will be "an American President who does not govern with negativism and fear of the future, but with vigor and vision and aggressive leadership--a president who is not isolated from our people, but who feels your pain and shares your dreams, and takes his strength and wisdom and courage from you."

In addition to the Hero-Quest myth, Carter also evokes fundamental myths of the nature of the American Dream and the American political process. These Carter uses in at least two ways: as a source of materials for his efforts to project a favorable image of himself and an unfavorable one of the Republican administration, and as a storehouse of the common ideas, attitudes, and images necessary for identification.

The American Dream

As Fisher has pointed out, the American Dream is composed of two myths which all Americans share in some degree and which together characterize American society: "the rags to riches materialistic myth of individual success and the egalitarian myth of brotherhood." In his analysis of the 1972 campaign, Fisher concluded that each candidate personified one part of the Dream, Nixon the materialistic and McGovern the moralistic.[34] That campaign became a competition

between these two basic myths, a circumstance which Fisher found disturbing since a confirmation of one required a denial of the other. In contrast to Nixon and McGovern, Carter attempts (at least in his acceptance speech) to create a vision of America which includes both the materialistic and moralistic myths. He characterizes himself as supportive of the Dream, with an emphasis on the moralistic portion, while simultaneously charging that the Republican administration has been destructive of it.

Carter's use of the materialistic myth is evident in several brief comments, as in his statement that "Americans reject the view that we must be reconciled to failures and mediocrity, or to an inferior quality of life," in his reference to Harry Truman as "a common man /who/ could be an uncommon leader," in his representation of his own rise from Georgia farm boy to presidential candidate. Carter makes it clear that recent Republican administrations have been responsible for serious damage to this part of the American Dream. Even worse, they have done this damage without suffering themselves: "Too many have had to suffer at the hands of a political and economic elite who have shaped decisions and never had to account for mistakes nor to suffer from injustice. When unemployment prevails, they never stand in line looking for a job. When deprivation results from a confused welfare system, they never do without food or clothing or a place to sleep. When the public schools are inferior or torn by strife their children go to exclusive private schools. . . . An unfair tax structure is designed to serve

their needs."

Carter characterizes himself throughout the speech as one who can make the materialistic myth a reality. He is "an engineer, a planner and a businessman" who will "eliminate waste," "provide tough management," solve the unemployment problem, and balance the budget. The implication is clear that under a Carter administration the average citizen will have a greater chance to realize his rags to riches dream. Carter, not one of the possible Republican nominees, is the one man who is capable of providing this opportunity and, therefore, he is worthy to be President.

Carter's emphasis, however, is clearly on the moralistic half of the American Dream. He explicitly asserts that America's uniqueness lies in its moral nature: "America's birth opened a new chapter in mankind's history. Ours was the first nation to dedicate itself so clearly to basic moral and philosophical principles." This establishment of a moral ground for government represented a "singular act," a "revolutionary development" of great import. Carter repeatedly suggests that recent Republican administrations have shown themselves to be antithetical to the moralistic myth. The nation has been "adrift," "shaken . . . by scandals and broken promises" and "unholy alliances." The people are "hurt and disillusioned." The blame for all this is placed upon the Nixon and Ford administrations:

> We feel that moral decay has weakened our country, that it is crippled by a lack of goals and values, and that our public officials have lost faith in us.

> We have been a nation adrift too long. We have been without leadership too long. We have had a divided, deadlocked government too long. We have been governed by veto too long. We have suffered enough at the hands of a tired, worn out administration without new ideas, without youth or vitality, without vision, and without the confidence of the American people.

In contrast, Carter characterizes himself as a true believer and supporter of the moralistic myth. Unlike certain Republicans, he has "never had more faith in America than I do today." He sees a "new mood in America," one of "inspiration and hope." Carter promises to base his policies as President on faith in the people, on "simple justice," on "respect and compassion," and on love for "[t]he poor, the weak, the aged, and the afflicted." America under Carter will become a moral nation of equal, free "brothers and sisters" whose hearts "will swell with pride to call ourselves Americans." The man who sees this vision of America and who promises to strive toward its realization is certainly worthy to be President, is he not?

The American Political Process

An additional myth which Carter employs to increase his appeal to American voters concerns the nature of the American political process. Poltical scientist Murray Edelman argues that Americans subscribe to two essential myths about their political system: (1) that governments and/or elected officials act in a rational manner and have the ability to produce the desired results, and (2)

that the people actually determine what governments and/or elected officials will do, that the public actively participates in the formation of policy and in the decision making process.[35] Edelman denies that either of these myths accurately reflects the way the system works. Officials frequently lack expertise and make decisions without adequate information; even when they have the expertise and knowledge, officials often lack the power or the will to take appropriate action. Voters do not determine policy; they only elect officials who seldom if ever consult them about particular decisions. Such consultation would be infeasible even if officials sincerely wished to base their decisions upon it--there are simply too many people, too many decisions, and too little time.

Carter appears to disagree with Edelman. Although he does assert that "government has its limits and cannot solve all our problems," Carter rather clearly argues that he and a Democratic Congress will have the knowledge and ability necessary to restructure government, revitalize the economy, eliminate inequalities, and lead the world into an era pf peace unprecedented. The lengthy and emphatic list of "We <u>can</u> have" items with which Carter concludes his address draws upon the myths of rationality and ability to a far greater degree than it suggests the limits of government.

One of Carter's major appeals is made through the myth of popular participation in government. The first claim which he makes is that this "will be the year when we give the government of this country back to the people of this country." One of the

lessons of the primary campaign, Carter asserts, is that it has reminded him "that the ultimate political influence rests not with the pawnbrokers, but with the people." He alleges that "It is time for the people to run the government, and not the other way around." Although no specific mechanism is described which will allow for this direct participation, Carter promises that he will be a "president who is not isolated from our people," one who "takes his strength and wisom and courage from you."

Movement toward increased popular participation has been made necessary, according to Carter, because of the actions of the last two Republican administrations. Carter characterizes them as removed from the public and even as actively opposed to public participation in policy formation or decision making. The recurring theme upon which he plays is that of secrecy: the last administrations have erected "walls of secrecy," "tight secrecy always seems to prevent reform," we need "to strip away the secrecy." Americans have "been held at arms length" by "unholy, self-perpetuating alliances . . . between money and politics." Carter thus characterizes Republicans as subverters of the American political process and himself as its supporter and promoter, particularly in terms of popular participation in government.

Conclusion

In his acceptance speech Carter evokes fundamental myths which provide a source of materials for his characterizations of his opponents

and himself. The Republican leaders are the villains of the tale: to remove them from office is to deliver the nation from "unholy alliances." As he portrays himself in the address, Carter is capable and worthy to be President. A successful Unpromising Hero who has completed the first part of his Quest, he has demonstrated his ability and is prepared to do so again in the coming months. As a personification of both aspects of the American Dream and a supporter of the American political process, he has shown himself worthy to become the Deliverer/Benefactor of the common people.

To the degree that Carter was successful in characterizing himself in mythic terms, the specific myths evoked are potentially problematic. To remain a Hero, one must continue to meet an overcome significant obstacles: one must be able to deliver the economic and social benefits promised. The moralistic and materialistic aspects of the American Dream are not always promoted through the same or even consistent policies: one may be faced with an apparent choice between human rights and the balance of payments or the state of detente. The public forum is not necessarily the best place to discuss and act upon important policies: one may require occasional retreats to Camp David. In evoking the myths of the Hero, the American Dream, and the political process, Carter not only contributed to an appealing image of himself as candidate and President, he also established a standard in terms of which he would be judged by those free and equal "brothers and sisters" whose support he sought.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Walter Burnham, "Fighting the Image War," The New Republic, 2 Oct. 1976, p. 20.

[2] Waldo W. Braden, "Myths in a Rhetorical Context," The Southern Speech Communication Journal, 40(1975), p. 115.

[3] Joseph Campbell, Myths to Live By (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1972), p. 12.

[4] Walter R. Fisher, "Reaffirmation and Subversion of the American Dream," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59(1973), p. 160.

[5] Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 24.

[6] Quoted in Braden, p. 115.

[7] Ibid., p. 116.

[8] Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana, Illinois: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1967), p. 4.

[9] Braden, p. 121.

[10] Edelman, pp. 16, 4.

[11] Campbell, p. 45.

[12] Quoted in Edelman, p. 18.

[13] Braden, p. 122.

[14] Edelman, p. 16.

[15] Braden, p. 122.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Edelman, p. 40.

[18] Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953), p. 46.

[19] Edelman, p. 6.

[20] Dan D. Nimmo, Popular Images of Politics: A Taxonomy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), pp. 100-01.

[21] Robert O. Anderson, "The Characterization Model for Rhetorical Criticism of Political Image Campaigns," Western Speech, 37(1973), p. 76.

[22] Braden, p. 126.

[23] For an exploration of this approach see Fisher's analysis of the Nixon-McGovern campaign in "Reaffirmation add Subversion of the American Dream."

[24] "Onward tc November," Time, 26 July 1976, p. 8.

[25] Ibid., p. 9.

[26] Orrin Klapp discusses each of these in some detail in "The Folk Hero," Journal of American Folklore, 62(1949), pp. 17-18.

[27] Ibid., p. 19.

[28] Herman Stelzner, "The Quest Story and Nixon's November 3, 1969 Address," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 57(1971), p. 164.

[29] All quotations from the speech are taken from the text reprinted in Vital Speeches of the Day, xxxxii(Aug. 15, 1976), 642-44.

[30] Quoted in "The Jimmycrats," Newsweek, 26 July 1976, p. 16.

[31] Klapp, p. 20. For a different, but not incompatible, description of hero types, see Stelzner, p. 166.

[32] Ibid., p. 21.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Fisher, p. 161.

[35] Edelman, pp. 192ff.